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RUEHNP/AMCONSUL NAPLES PRIORITY 3521  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0941  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 2983  
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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [NATO](#) [EWWT](#) [KCRM](#) [PBTS](#) [PHSA](#)  
PTER, IT  
SUBJECT: HOA PIRACY: EMBASSY ROME REQUEST TO INCLUDE ITALY  
IN CONTACT GROUP

REF: HALL-HARTMANN EMAILS 12/18-19/08

Classified By: Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Barbara A. Leaf for Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

1 (S) Embassy Rome requests that Italy be invited to join the now-expanded Contact Group on Somali Piracy. Italy, aside from being a major contributor to diplomatic, humanitarian and military efforts in the region, has significant intel collection capabilities that would contribute to the success of the Contact Group's efforts. Excluding Italy would deprive the Contact Group of Italy's valuable capabilities and experience in the region and could discourage the GOI from taking a more active role in anti-piracy efforts in general during its G8 Presidency in 2009. Per ref email exchange, post has gathered additional information on Italian capabilities and contributions in the following areas:

12. (S/NF) Intel Capabilities:

- The Italian External Intelligence Service has a long-standing presence in the region and regularly shares information on Somalia with us.
- The Italian Navy is deploying the ITS ELETTRA, a SIGINT ship with a robust collection platform, in the Gulf of Aden and the East coast of Africa from 21 January to 15 April and has requested U.S. Navy assistance with satellite communications support.

13. (C) Military Capabilities:

- NATO Operation Allied Provider's implementing force (Standing Maritime Group Two) was commanded by an Italian Admiral for the duration of the Operation, and Italy contributed a destroyer (the flagship).
- USAFRICOM's Navy Component Command was launched at Naples in October 2008, alongside the existing U.S. Command for Navy Region Europe and the NATO Allied Maritime Command which ran Operation Allied Provider.
- EU Anti-piracy Operation ATALANTA: The Italian Cabinet on December 18 approved a commitment of Euro 8.7 million and 114 military personnel to this mission. In a December 18 press conference MOD La Russa underscored repeatedly that this additional expenditure required sacrifices in other portions of the MOD Missions Abroad budget.
- Italian Judicial Authority: in the same Cabinet decree the

MOD inserted legal provisions giving Italian military commanders expanded legal authority under Italian law to implement international legal provisions allowing for the arrest and prosecution of persons suspected of piracy when seized on the high seas.

¶4. (SBU) Diplomatic/Humanitarian Capabilities

- Italy plays an active role in, and was a founding member of, the International Contact Group on Somalia.

- Italy holds the G-8 presidency starting in January and plans to place a renewed emphasis on Africa.

- Italy is active in the region as former colonial power and significant provider of humanitarian aid.

¶5. (U) Post is available for further follow-up as necessary.

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